

**FEDERAL CITY PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 16, 1994
Levine School**

MINUTES

Directors: Present: Boykin, Brayton, Dorr, Fiorito, Gerard,
Madigan, Payich, Streit, Wheeler, Wolfe
Absent: Smith, Ziskind (no proxies assigned)

Staff: Holloway, McClelland

Visitors: Larry Cohen, Bob Wonneberger

The meeting began at 7:32 P.M.

REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 16, 1994 MINUTES

The minutes for February 16, 1994, were corrected as follows:

One spelling error was corrected and on page two, last paragraph, at the end of the first sentence, \$5,000 is changed to \$3,000.

Motion to approve minutes as amended: Brayton. Second: Boykin.
Unanimously approved.

In response to a question by Payich, Madigan clarified that a summary of Board Meeting actions will appear in Hot Notes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

McClelland presented the financial report. Currently, revenue exceeds expenses by \$36,000. CD sales is the other income on the financial statement. Cash and investments are \$201,000 versus \$155,000 last year. Our cash balance is \$50,000 (reflecting a net cash decline).

It is planning time for the fiscal '95 budget which is due by late April or early May. McClelland asked all department heads to think about departmental expenses and needs for the next fiscal year. Gerard asked whether McClelland wanted input from the Capital Club chairman. McClelland said yes.

McClelland announced that in the future, the breakdown of the expenses and revenue of the small ensemble groups will be lumped into one rehearsal category.

In response to Payich's question about what is rehearsal revenue, McClelland stated that it was a reimbursement from camp. Potomac Fever's \$2,100 expense is for arrangements and was expected.

Motion to approve the financial report: Brayton. Second: Wolfe.
The motion was unanimously approved.

CD Report

Wonneberger delivered the report. All production costs are being rolled into the first pressing of the CD. As agreed, the first printing is for 2,000 CDs and 1,000 tapes.

Wonneberger presented a list of CD costs, among which were riser transportation costs. Wheeler informed Wonneberger that the cost shown will be greater because Wonneberger's figure only reflects the cost for the first recording session.

The glass master cost for the actual printing of the CD is a one-time cost of printing for 50,000 units. First class mailing of CDs and tapes will cost one dollar each. Because we plan to charge two dollars for shipping and handling, we will recoup those costs. Wheeler obtained a reduction in Lisner's commission to twenty percent from its usual thirty percent, permitting us to show a better profit margin on our Lisner sales. Because of commission costs, Wonneberger suggested that we promote face-to-face sales over in-store sales because that is where the highest profit margin will be.

The CD will have a twelve-page booklet with front and back covers in color; the booklet will not impede visibility of the CD cover.

All CDs and tapes sold will have an accompanying order form that will be filled out. That form serves as our inventory control and provides a mailing list for marketing and fund raising. The new order forms will be created by next week.

Lambda Rising's first order will be for 50 CDs. We will bill Lambda and if it pays within ten days it receives a two percent discount. Only Lambda is receiving this offer. All other retailers must either pay in advance or C.O.D. Wonneberger noted how helpful Jim Bennett, one of Lambda's owners has been.

When asked about other stores that sell CDs, Wonneberger stated that such places as Tower Records, Kemp Mill, and Olsson's must have the actual CD.

The CD will be advertised in the Lambda Book Report which is mailed to 500,000 people and which is free publicity to us. Once we are in the Lambda Report, we will be constantly in it. Rosendall just finished the blurb for submission on March 24. The Report does not appear until May.

Wonneberger was advised not to limit our marketing vision, but market as broadly as you can afford. Following this advice, he proposes a phased-in approach.

The CD ad will appear in the April concert program with an accompanying mail order form. Wonneberger believes that our best chance to make money with the CD is on April 15.

Wonneberger has set as a goal: To reorder before September. Reorder lag time can be as long as a month. Brayton recommended reviewing CD inventory during the summer and placing our reorder in enough time to have CDs on hand for the GALA Leadership conference in Charlotte over the 1994 Labor Day weekend. We will have to pay a vendor fee, but there is no percentage.

We propose to sell to the house in L.A., recognizing that we may not be able to sell there, but we can sell to the L.A. chorines.

Wonneberger is looking into placing an ad in the L.A. program, as well as an ad in the Carnegie Hall program. We are placing a GALAgram ad that will coincide with our June concert.

Wonneberger is getting a list of 1,400 gay friendly, gay-owned stores. Lambda has promised to stock all of its stores.

Wonneberger noted that we must check our post office box more often during the summer, because it is crucial that we have a speedy turn around on filling CD orders.

Wonneberger suggested the possibility of implementing voice mail to permit CD orders by telephone. This is only one of many suggestions that can be implemented to jack up sales. A drawback to voice mail is the need to make return calls to verify sales.

We will be dealing with Lady Slipper, a distributor that handles many gay choruses. Streit advised that they are already knocking on our door. Although their cut is 50 percent, there are no other expenses. They pay shipping and advertising. If they hold inventory, there is a larger cut.

Holloway asked how will we fill orders? Wonneberger replied that most of our orders will be face-to-face, except for the April concert where we will be dealing with mail orders.

Support staff is needed to help with the orders. Wheeler reported that support staff is under utilized at the moment.

When the season ends, we must have a game plan. It was noted that the CD cut by the San Francisco Chorus in 1981 is still selling. Wonneberger suggested a formalized CD committee.

Wonneberger reported that we are under budget on CD costs. We have also lowered our physical production costs of the cassette.

Wolfe asked about cash flow problems. We were reminded that donors have underwritten a chunk of the CD costs. Wonneberger reported that CD bills come due in April and May, noting that we do have outlay, but so far that coincides with what is coming in.

The break even point for sales is approximately 60 percent of our first order. It could happen sooner, but Wonneberger is being conservative. As the orders flow in, we will be able to target our marketing.

Currently, Holloway and Dupler are working on which cuts to include in the CD.

Wonneberger wants everything to go forward by April 1, so that we have everything by May 1.

Fiorito asked who is talking with the CD donors regarding which track selection they will sponsor. Once it is decided what will go on the CD, we will go forward with the sponsorship matter. In the meantime, sponsors will be alerted that they must be available by March 31 to decide which track they want to sponsor.

Holloway announced that we are looking at fourteen or fifteen tracks. Wonneberger announced that we are ordering a sixty-minute tape. There may be a bonus track on the CD.

Boykin announced that donors will be called in the order of the date they offered money to the CD. Wheeler requested and received clarification that this was the date on which GMCW received at least \$500, specifically earmarked for the CD.

Streit announced that donations of \$100 or more will also be acknowledged on the CD jacket.

Wonneberger received a deserved round of applause for a job well done.

COMPUTER REPORT

Madigan delivered the computer report (attached). He announced that the first computer committee meeting held at his home went very well and that the next meeting might be conducted on GLIB. See the attached report for further details.

McClelland asked when the computer committee plans to make the expenditure. Madigan replied August 1. When asked whether there is a price range, Madigan responded no. McClelland asked for prewarning of the expenditure. It was predicted that the computer

will be ordered one to two months before August 1. Madigan stated that the committee is avoiding shopping until it decides what GMCW's needs are.

In looking at the potential uses, Dorr noted that they are bipolar. Madigan stated that the committee has to decide whether to tackle all uses at the same time or prioritize them. Dorr cautioned against making decisions solely by the numbers. Madigan stated that the committee is attuned to security, safety, and access concerns. He added that the committee does not want to create work, but rather to simplify existing work.

Holloway asked if the committee will schedule priority times for computer use. Madigan responded that the committee is also exploring what uses can satisfactorily be accomplished outside of the computer, such as art work and graphics.

Madigan announced that the committee meetings are open and the members are open to suggestions.

PRODUCTION REPORT (attached)

Wheeler delivered the report. In addition to the attached material, Wheeler reported that Lisner was not available on Saturday, December 17, 1994. He asked for input on where we should hold our Holiday concert. Many ideas were put forth, such as holding concerts in more than one place. It was suggested the matter be discussed outside of the Board meeting.

REPERTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Holloway delivered the report. Holloway announced that it will be a full recording session on the 19th until 2:00 P.M. We will record the flute tracks that day. He also announced that the level of instrumentation will not be the same for any two tracks. This was an accident but he does not think it is so bad.

Work on the costumes for the Spring show is going well. Holloway provided more details on the WAGLIA invitation which is an interfaith service in connection with Gay Pride. He recommends that GMCW accept the invitation unless there is a schedule conflict. The service will be in the Church of the Pilgrim which seats 600.

On the Pride concert on June 18th, Holloway reported on the "Royal Court." This will be a walk through of the best drag performers, composed of a crew of racially diverse, stunning drag queens.

Holloway discussed proposed plans for an affordable European tour. Affordable means a cost of \$1500 per person.

For the Spring '95 concert, Holloway recommends a program featuring African-American music at the Lincoln Theatre. He has discovered a group of six African-American women with operatically trained voices, who present, in his opinion, a very exciting, high class act. He proposes that they appear with the Chorus for the Spring '95 program. This group will appear in the Washington area this Fall.

For Pride '95, Holloway recommends a joint appearance with a feminist Chorus. Based on their good reputation, he likes Anna Cruses of Philadelphia. The theme of the concert will be to celebrate the feminist branch of music that began approximately thirty years ago.

Holloway also proposes to have a Lesbian comic as MC. He believes that will help lighten the mood when gay men and Lesbians mingle.

Music for that concert would include David York arrangements of Holly Near, Chris Williamson, and Miriam Makeba songs. We will also present concert music by women composers.

Fiorito asked, in light of two out of three concerts in a season being focused on minorities, whether we should have that focus from a marketing point of view.

Holloway views the season as a crossover or diversity season and sees logical tie-ins. He stressed that marketing for an African-American audience in the Lincoln Theatre is important. Holloway believes that the proposed program gets out the word that GMCW is a group that respects other musical traditions. Marketing could center around the fact that diversity is a theme of the 90ies.

Holloway views the women's concert as an extension of a community of pride. GMCW develops pride and is not just a group of shirtless men in a parade. The pride we develop through music encompasses men and women. Holloway also reminded the Board members of the energies created at the matinee concert at Lisner in March '93 when GMCW performed with the Atlanta Women's Chorus and the Lesbian MC. This is a format we have already successfully experienced. The discussion included mention of concerns that our ticket prices are too high for women.

Holloway acknowledged that the missing blank on this concert is who to have as the Lesbian comic. Payich suggested Susan Westenhoffer. Another suggestion was Paula Poundstone, who has given a concert at the Warner Theatre. Both of these women are in the mainstream and would offer the advantage of pulling in a straight audience. Holloway believes that the Spring '95 concert will appeal to our audience because of the jazz music we will present and the mere fact of being in a new, beautiful theatre.

Fiorito seemed persuaded that the theme of diversity in the same season could very well work.

A note of warning concerning the sensitivity of audiences to comics was interjected. A reference was made to the comic at the GALA Leadership Conference in Minneapolis Labor Day weekend 1993.

Madigan spoke in favor of explaining the musical pieces and putting sociological notes in the program.

Holloway envisions a journey through musical traditions.

It was noted that we have to know concert dates and venues. We will settle the dates as quickly as possible.

There is a big push for a brochure to go into the June concert program. It was noted that June is the last time we see an audience. There was also a push to increase season subscriptions, partly because we are booking venues much earlier than usual. Brayton asked whether since Wheeler books the hall, the concert can be tailored to the hall. In this discussion, it was noted that the Lansburgh Theatre is not expensive. However, its seating capacity is too small.

Payich asked Holloway when the notices regarding auditions will be completed. Payich suggested that it would be nice if the notices are sent out before the end of the season.

Brayton asked about the status of our invitation to the Lincoln. The Board learned that the invitation is off.

Holloway suggested that other choruses perform at more than one location in a weekend and that is something GMCW could do. It was suggested that we explore alternative halls and consider performing in Arlington, for example, on a Friday and then in D.C. on a Saturday. He also suggested a Sunday matinee, especially for a Holiday concert.

Brayton reminded the Board of how poorly attended GMCW's War Prayer performance was at UDC. That probably had more to do with the music than with the location.

Our lack of preplanning was discussed. We seem to keep procrastinating. Ideally, we should be on a cycle where we know our concert venues and programs two years in advance.

Regarding Lincoln, it appears affordable price-wise. The discussion then focused on the cost of other venues. For example, it cost us \$10,000 to raise the curtain for the Pride concert. We were also reminded that the Holiday concert is traditionally a profit maker.

We are currently in the bind of having no income for six months, the summers months and the fall months before the Holiday concert.

It was stated that the time has come for GMCW to explore how revenue comes in. Our season subscription base is labeled woeful. The time may have come for us to challenge some of our assumptions. It is a risk when you deviate from a formula that you have always operated under. It was suggested that we aim to sell 3,000 tickets at a concert. Other long-range planning concerns include preparation for a second CD.

Holloway suggested that we go to the recording studio two weeks after a concert to lay down the best four to five tracks from the concert.

Other possible concert sites were discussed. For example, Tawes has 1,300 seats, but it is expensive. There is T.C. Williams and the Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts where GMCW has performed before. We should also not rule out the auditorium at UDC.

FUNDRAISING REPORT

Fiorito delivered the report. At this time there are few additional donations to report.

Fundraising activity has been focused on meetings and planning sessions.

There was a meeting on March 7 for the direct mail for the phonathon. The phonathon will take place the week of May 16th.

After a review of our mailing list, Fiorito reported that he is looking forward to getting the list back in our hands. It will create new problems, but we will have the advantage of control.

750 new names have been added to the mailing list. We now have 4,000 to 5,000 decent names on our direct mail list.

Fiorito announced there will be a meeting on March 24 with Capital Club officers to discuss Capital Club membership and special appeals. The big effort on CDs has caused us to reach a point where we should clarify our definition of a Capital Club member and also reconsider how we dole out membership benefits. The Board will be notified if any changes are decided on.

Work on the raffle is proceeding. One of the prizes will be a week in Key West, including airfare.

The Magic Show is still up in the air. Wolfe is in contact with Hal Diamond to see if it will happen.

OTHER BUSINESS

The concert at Sumner will be minus the flautist.

Streit announced that Michael Baker is soliciting Circle of Excellence nominations. The site for the Awards Banquet has been decided upon.

Lambda Squares has extended an invitation for GMCW to sing the national anthem, O Canada, and five minutes of selections from our CD at their National Gay Square Dancing opening at 7:30 P.M. on Friday, July 1, at the ballroom in the Shoreham Hotel. In return, they can offer us a booth from which to sell our CD. Dorr moved to accept the invitation. Second: Brayton. The motion unanimously passed.

Boykin delivered the report. Because of the amount of time expected to break down after the spring concert, the after concert party will be held at Lisner. The bottom floor will be set up as a dance floor.

The former Wolenskys is now a pizza parlor (Bertuccis) and will be the site of the Pride after concert party.

The Museum in the Alexandria Lyceum will be the site of the Circle of Excellence Awards Banquet. We will eat in one area of the building and then adjourn to another area for the awards presentation.

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

Cohen delivered the report. He said that the committee is progressing to a more formalized status. He announced that the committee put together a most comprehensive marketing plan and the groundwork has been laid to implement that marketing plan for Our Show of Shows. The effort includes fliers and posters.

Motion to adjourn: Brayton. Second: Dorr. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 P.M.

Submitted by: **Robert G. Wheeler**
FCPAA Secretary
April 18, 1994